

*Mercurius Mercuriorum,* 5 K

S T U L T I S S I M U S .

# VVRITTEN

For the use of the **A S S E M B L Y** of  
**D I V I N E S**

sitting at *Westminster*. 1647.



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## *Mercurius Mercuriorum, stultissimus.*



Hough this Pamphlet hath a foolish Title , yet in many places it plaies the foole wittily , as blind men catch Hares by chance ; so Children and fooles speake truth through their ignorance ; and truth (me thinkes) should be made welcome, and well entertained by you most Reverend and learned Fathers of the Assembly.

Then the truth is , that your great and abundant labours and studies are ingratelully requited , so that if you knew how people doe talke of you, your eares would tingle; for at all times and places, heere, there, every where (now and anone to) yee are scarce accounted to be Christians , these things a wise man dare not tell you, for feare of a Jayle, a Plundering, or Sequestration: And a foole may run in danger of a whippe , if he be so bold to tell you the truth ; so that you must needes be full of errours , because you will neither heare or believe truth from either wise man or a foole.

At all adventures have amongst you blind Harpers, ile tell you how it is, and partly what folkes say.

First the People doe talk , and mutter against you , and call you Innovaters , and that by your usurping power , and practise, you have deprived them of Gods true Worship, and service; you have fram'd them a New no-Religion , and that when the King had paternall Sovereignty, and the Bishops, and Clergy pastoral dignity ; they then were men in peace and unity , and then they were the Sheepe of the pasture ; ( but now for want of good Shepheards ) they have beene, and are Sheepe of the Shambles.

Secondly , they say that by reading of Histories they perceive that the Office and Dignity of Bishops is as old as neere the passion of our Saviour : They have found that before Saint John the Evangelist



Evangelist dyed, there were three or foure Bishops of *Rome*, also that Saint *Paul* doth name *Linus*, 2 Tim. 4. 21. (who was Bishop there) And *Paul* also (at *Athens*) converted *Dennis* the Areopagite, who was afterward the first Bishop there, Act. 17. The Apostle also calls *Clement* his fellow labourer, and that his name is written in the booke of life; this *Clement* was the third Bishop of *Rome*. They have further found that Saint *Marke* the Evangelist was Bishop of *Alexandria*, that *Anianus* succeeded *Marke*, in the eight yeere of the Raigne of *Nero*, and was Bishop 22 yeeres; next him *Abillius* sate 13. yeeres, and when Saint *Paul* was at *Antioch*, *Evodius* was Bishop there, and sate 22 yeeres, and did out live (by one yeere) both Saint *Peter* and *Paul* the Apostles (as *Eusebius* saith in his Ecclesiasticall History, and after him was *Ignatius* Bishop there 44 yeeres) At *Jerusalem* the Apostle Saint *James*, was thirty yeeres Bishop. That *Simon* succeeded *James*, and sate thirty eight yeeres, and by the Apostles themselves, *Policarpus* was made Bishop of *Smyrna*, (one of the seaven Churches of *Asia*) and he'd that Bishoprick eighty yeeres. And Saint *Paul* made *Timothy* Bishop of *Ephesus*, another of the seaven Asian Churches, and *Titus* Bishop of *Creete* or *Candie*: by these Histories and Relations the people have found that some of the Apostles themselves were Bishops, and that they ordained others in that sacred function: In their times they did know and approve the succession of them, and for the perpetuity of their Office to the end of the world. Saint *Paul* gives an expresse charge to *Timothy* (and that charge doth extend to all Bishops to the last day) in these words, 1. Tim. 6. 13. and 14. *I charge thee, in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ which under Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keepe this Commandement without spot and unrebukeable, untill the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.* According to the Letter the Apostle doth lay a charge upon *Timothy* which he could not possibly performe, for *Timothy* hath beene dead neere 1600 yeare, so that he hath not, or could not personally live till Christs second comming: So that it is plaine that the Apostle meant of all succeeding Bishops to the end of the world.

Since those times, as there hath beene alwaies Heretiques, and blasphemous



blasphemous Hell houndes to suppress the truth, where Bishops in all Ages and generall Counsells have vanquished, confuted, and contemned their Blasphemies and Heresies; they were men of more capacity, learning, wisdom and gravity then petty Presbyterians, or Lay Elders, who at the Counsell of *Nice* in *Bithynia*, in *Asia* confuted *Arrius* (who denyed the Divinity of Christ) which cursed Heresie was spread over the most Parts of Christendome) in the yeare 327, there were no lesse then 318 Bishops in that *Nicen* Counsell, by whom that Heresie was overthrowne, since then at these generall Counsells heere under mentioned, Gods truth hath beene defended, and hereticall, and dangerous opinions have beene repelled by Bishops. The Counsell of *Antioch* in *Syria*, Anno 346. The Counsell of *Ariminum* in *Italy* 361. At *Carthage* in *Africa*, Anno. 419. Counsell of *Calcedon* in *Bithynia*, 453.

In all these, and such like Counsells there sate not one patching Parish Presbyter, or illiterate Lay-Elder. But there sate grand and learned Bishops and Doctours, who withstood the *Montanists*, *Marcionists*, *Donatists*, *Anabaptists*, *Hemerobaptists*, *Cerdonists*, *Chiliasmists*, (In those dayes there were no *Brownists*, nor undermining Jesuiticall *Papists*) but there were *Cainites*, *Anthropomorphites*, *Ebionites*, *Sabellians*, *Helvidians*, *Eunomians*, *Apollinarians*, *Carpocratians*, *Bassilians*, *Cerinthians*, *Euticheans*, *Nestorians*, *Alogianians*, *Novatians*, *Pelagians*, *Samosateneans*, *Manichies*, *Gnosticks*, and many more Heretiques and Heresies did the Christian Bishops confute, convert, or confound: But to let forraigne Parts and Actions alone for a while, wee doe humbly desire the venerable Bishop-hating Assembly to be pleased to take notice that we have read somewhat of *England*, and *English* Bishops.

Some Writers (of good credit) doe affirme that *Joseph* of *Arimathea* (who begged the body of our Lord, and buried it) came hither and converted many people from Paganisme to Christianity, Anno *Christi*, 63. the said *Joseph* dwelt, and dyed at *Glastenbury*, and in Anno 179. King *Lucius* (116 yeeres after the Arrivall of *Joseph*) was converted to the Christian Faith, the said King being conscientiously touched with the hatred of Idolatry, caused 28 Pagan Temples to be cleansed and purified, and the said Temples



he turned into as many Cathedralls; and having cast out the Hea-thenish Idolls, with the *Arch-Flammins*, and *Flammins*, he placed learned and godly Arch-bishops, and Bishops in their roomes, the first Arch-bishoprick was at *London*, where late 16 Arch-bishops, then that estate was (by the Favour of Princes, and affaires of State conducing thereunto) translated to *Canterbury*, in which see have beene 75 Arch-bishops: *Yorke* had the second Metro-politan seate, wherein have late 68 Arch-bishops; *Caerlegion* in *Wales* (upon the River of *Uske* in *Monmouth-shire*) was Anciently a see Metropolitickall, and it is plaine of *Primates*, and other Bishops, there have beene in *England*, and the Dominion of *Wales* the Number of 1153.

By reading of Histories the people have found that the function of Bishops is by Christ, and his Apostles Auncient Institution; and by these readings they have gained so much reason & knowledge, that a new framed Geneva Presbytery and Lay-Elders was never, or never will be fit or congruent to be able Pastors for the guide and direction of Christian soules; for (say they) would it be a handsome sight to see a Pedlar in a Pulpit, a Weaver to baptise, a Miller to administer the Lords Supper, or a Sowgelder to joyne men and women in marriage; spits, pots, platters, kettles, and dripping pans &c. doe become a Kirching, but they are not for a Chamber or a Parlour, carpets, cushions, and stately hangings of Arras or Tapestry, are not for the stable or barne; Tinkers or Cobblers, will not make good Judges or Justices of the Peace, Ploughmen and Carters incapable to be sent as Ambassadors. Botchers or Buttonmakers will never make sound Divines, or expert valliant Captaines; *Ne Sutor ultra crepidam.*

What shamelesse barbarous lumps of sordid ignorance are they that hold learning, wisdom, gravity, study, and paines taking, to be of no regard or estimation, St. Paul approved the *Galatians* for receiving him reverently, Gal. 4. 14. And he saith, *how beautifull are the feete of them that bring glad tidings of peace*, Rom. 10. 15. and wee are so farre indebted to them (as they are the Ministers of God, and instruments of our salvation) that wee doe owe them our very selves, as St. Paul saies to *Philemon*. Servants are to be honoured, if in an honourable way they serve an honorable



honorable Master, Bishops are Gods Ambassadors (by a pastorall, not a Regall power) Therefore Honourable Christ gave Honour to *Annas* and *Caiphas* (who were wicked Bishops) therefore he is not well pleased that Christian Bishops should be contemned; we must give honour to all men, and to whom it is due Rom. 10.7 1. Pe. 2.17. which shewes that Bishops are not excluded; they ought to be honoured for their high calling, for when Church Governours are held in reverend estimation, then is Religion venerably dignified, for if Bishops and Reverend Divines be villified or disesteemed, Religion will be of small or no regard; wee ought to honour them with our heartes which is an instruction that they should not be abused with our tongues or pens. For the Title of Lord (which sticks so in the stomacks of our Hypocreticall Sectaries) The Prophet *Eliab* was a good Church-man in his times, and *Obediah* (an honourable man and an honest Courtier) a true servant of God, under a wicked King, the same *Obediah* that hid and relieved an hundred of the Lords Prophets in a Cave, which *Ahab* and *Jesebell* would have destroyed; that noble man did call *Eliab* Lord, 1 Kin. 18. 7. and the Prophet did accept of the Title in the eight verse; Also the Sunamite called him Lord twice, 2. King. 4. 16, and 26, and 28. And some translations do give that stile to *Elisbai*, 2 King. 6. 5. And King *Hazael* called him Lord, 2 King. 8. 12. and King *Joash* called him Father, and wept over him, 2 King. 13. 14. And as a right Reverend and Learned Divine hath written, that it is no higher a Title then a woman ought (nay every wife) by the example of *Sarah*, Gen. 18. 12. to call her husband, and St *Peter* doth exhort every wife to call her husband so, 1 Pet. 3. 6. But Bishops are not Lords and Masters to be feared, but Reverend Fathers to be loved, and it is most unchristian like to scandalise their callings or persons, it being such a blow to Religion, and an open gap to let in Atheisme, and all other Heresies; besides it hinders Pagans, Turkes, Infidells, and Jewes from their conversion.

Beares did once take the Prophets part, and tare the children that mocked them in pieces: And now some wise men (more foolish then Children) doe mock and persecute the Prophets; but these people have faithes of divers frames and moles, fitter for silence

lence then confession ; and more worthy of Derision then confutation ; for confutation can never gaine a Glorious Victory over malicious inveterate obstinacy.

Good Bishops are Sowers , Gods word is the Seed , and faithful hearts the Ground ; they should be Rulers of their Flocks : but yet the more they Rule, the more they serve ; for *Peters Chaire* is a Seat of service , not of Sovereignty, nor is a Bishops Office a place of rest , full of labour , there is no Charge more laborious , and dangerous , nor is any function more Blessed and acceptable before God ( if it be well discharged : ) I could be larger in this discourse ; for this time what is here related may satisfie all such as will be satisfied , with such satisfaction as Scriptures , Fathers, Counsellors, Antiquity , sence, or reason ; and because your holy fatherhoods of the reverend and most sanctified Assembly are richly endued with learning , and knowledge unmeasurable , I have made bold to crave your acceptance and protection : this small Pamphlet is of good use , and ease for many mislead , and ignorant People ; for here they may see how they have been abused in being perswaded that a Bishops Office is neither of Antiquity , Authority , or estimation : the great volumes of Ecclesiasticall Histories are of too high a price for every common reader ; this poore sheet of paper is cheape , and speaks as much truth ( in a little roome ) as may serve for any reasonable understanding.



**FINIS.**